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THE PUEBLO CASE HANGS FIRE

No progress is visible in the Pueblo case although bilateral talks at Panmunjom are continuing.

During the celebration of the "Korean People's Army" 20th Anniversary in Pyongyang Premier Kim Il-song accused the Pueblo of a "gangster-like, piratic act" which proved that "US maneuverings" for a new Korean war had reached a "grave stage." He in-

sisted that the North Koreans do not want war, but warned the US would get "only corpses" if it tried to solve the case through "threat and blackmail."

Pyongyang publicized a second, more detailed "confession" by Pueblo captain Bucher and published four photos of alleged US documents which place the vessel in North Korean territorial waters on six occasions.

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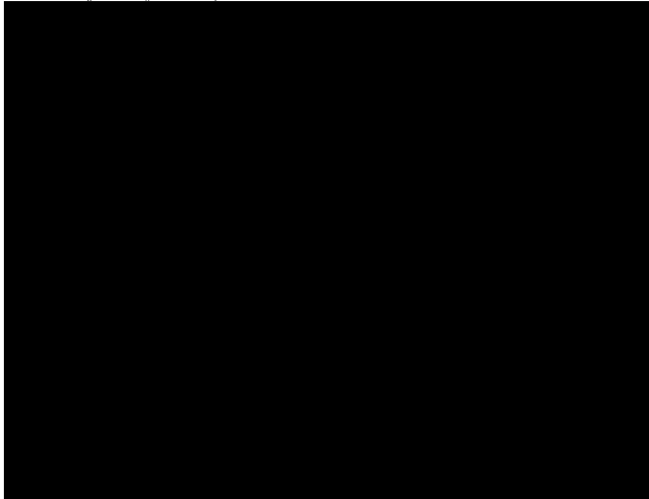
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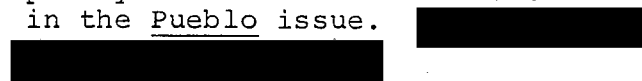
Despite Pyongyang's charges of an armed incursion this week, the level of incidents along the DMZ has been low. Pressure for some action against the north remains high in Seoul, however.



South Korean officials retreated somewhat from last week's charges of US "appeasement" of North Korea. In talks with Cyrus Vance, President Pak seemed to be out to use South Korean dissatisfaction over US handling of the Pueblo incident to extract the maximum military aid and political concessions from Washington. Seoul has been dissatisfied with

the rate of modernization of South Korean forces and South Korea's lack of voice in UN Command decisions. Initial South Korean reactions to the Vance mission reveal some dissatisfaction with the outcome and suggest that Seoul will continue to seek additional US commitments.

Soviet Party Secretary Ponomarev visited Pyongyang on 9 and 10 February following his visit to Tokyo where he and politburo member Suslov had held talks with the Japanese Communist Party. Ponomarev probably used the occasion to brief the North Koreans on the upcoming international Communist consultative meeting in Budapest and to test the present mood in Pyongyang in light of the Pueblo affair. North Korea has long opposed such an international Communist meeting and does not plan to send a delegation. Ponomarev's visit, though offering a gesture of Moscow's "fraternal" solidarity with North Korea, provided no indication that the Soviets had departed from their policy of minimal involvement in the Pueblo issue.



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